

Research Excellence: citing, being cited and the H Index

Elisabete A. Silva

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During the past years a lot has been stated about productivity in research and the metrics to evaluate such productivity. Depending on the subject being discussed, many people in academia will state that the concept of metric in itself is wrong and research excellence shouldn't be viewed as resulting from metric(s), from a measurement. That, by measuring we narrow down everything to a value and therefore leave outside a lot of other things helpful to understand research excellence.

Nevertheless, pragmatism is required when fast amounts of funding are available and the impacts of research move entire economics, generate money, employment, patents, industrial production, that save lives and make the world move and progress. As a consequence countries, universities, departments and researchers are ranked accordingly to a set of metrics. This has become increasingly important in last decade in the sciences/engineering and is now becoming norm in the Social Sciences and Humanities.

One of such metrics is the **H Index**. In the past, the pure action of citing a work would be a direct action of acknowledging that specific work was used in order to expand our own research. Nowadays, while this is still at the core of every paper/book/report, citations are used as a measure of excellence, besides the content of the paper in itself. The pure fact that one cites a paper/book has a direct implication not only in our own paper, but also in the other person's publication – we will increase his/her's number of citations for that particular paper. Therefore, while the **act of citing** is still important, the act of **being cited** became equally important.

Not only the numbers of papers per researcher is important, but also how many citations each specific paper had until the present moment. And this relation between number of papers and citations will indicate how successful a researcher/author is. The H Index is the metric that demonstrates that relation. In the sciences and engineering subjects, projects are win/lost, prizes are awarded, promotions will be granted depending of the H Factor of a researcher. While in the sciences and engineering the closer you are to applied fields the higher the citation numbers, the average will point to H-Index around values of 15-25 for Full Professors. In the Social Sciences and Humanities, a H Index around 5-10 tends to grant a Full Professorial promotion (1).

Suddenly promoting research became a must, not only because of the **content** in itself but also because of the **awareness factor**. Being aware of what is being published and making others aware of your own work is the key for success (as a consequence we have search engines dedicated to that: WoK; Scopus, Google Scholar, etc) .

It is interesting to remember how, when I was a student, some of my academic mentors kept mentioning 'don't forget that unpublished work is not work' and, as a consequence of such statements, some of us would make that effort going beyond the mere publication of the manuscript and getting a diploma. For those not going beyond the ultimate goal of submitting the manuscript of the Ph.D. Dissertation, there was always that final comment before the graduation ceremony: 'all that work just to shelve the dissertation in a dusty corner of the library'.

Why is this important to UDP, to its authors and its papers?: in an era of awareness, making others aware of the work is as important as to develop the paper in itself...otherwise how can we progress towards more socio-economic and environmental progress? How can we make sure others build on our research and progress?

Nevertheless, and while I consider that metrics are important and there should be criteria to evaluate progress, at the end of the day a paper is always a paper. A research paper needs to demonstrate innovation and produce the linking points between its work and the work it builds upon, as a consequence **innovation** and **citations** are still one of the most important element in a paper, a good paper will be innovative and at the same time will demonstrate how did it build

innovation by citing work, how did it move forward from existent research. And if a good paper does that, it will be able to produce many 'times cited' – as a consequence that paper and those citations will end up contributing to the authors and other cited papers authors' success. It is interesting to see that such a H-Index can indirectly reveal so much about being fair and acknowledge other people's work through citation, and by doing so increase our own productivity and excellence.

UDP strives on achieving the same goals, a research paper needs to be innovative, a research paper needs to demonstrate the progress, the context bridging with existent research, with methods, or/and with the past researchers. By doing so UDP grants innovation, assures the ethical and transparent delivery of information that acknowledges those that are or were involved in the production of research being addressed. This number of UDP emphasizes these needs once more, presenting three innovative research papers "Security sensitivity index: evaluating urban vulnerability" by **Shach-Pinsly and Tamar Ganor**; "A framework for analysing neighbourhood resilience" by **Mariko Uda and Christopher Kennedy**; and "Strategic redevelopment of Brownfield sites in Tehran, Iran" by **Kamran Zekavat and Rana Motamedi**. What these papers have in common? In their different approaches, answering different questions, using different methods and case studies, these three papers organized the research accordingly to an outline of the problem and research context producing a clear description of methodology and results and all used citation as a clear mark of research excellence.

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